

## CAMPUS

The students voted nursing professor Serah Choi as their 2022 Educator of the Year. Discover how she impacts students and how she was honored during the ceremony.

P3

## CONVERSATION

After 60 years, the physics department is decommissioning its plutonium supply. Professor James Robertson explains the plutonium's historic use and future.

P4

## CULTURE

The Diogenes Film Festival returned for its 18th anniversary and showcased three years worth of students' work after a long hiatus. Learn about the genres represented and the awards students received.

P6

# Local Auto Shop Catches Fire Following Gas Explosion



Emergency vehicles in front of the auto shop and Chevron station

*photo courtesy PUC Public Relations*

**By Lauren VandenHoven**

Angwin Valley View Auto Shop, located on Howell Mountain Road next to the Chevron station, caught fire Wednesday afternoon, June 8.

The shop suffered damages, but no students were in the facility and no one present was injured.

The fire started at approximately 4:35 p.m.

and is believed to have resulted from an exploding gas tank in one of the vehicles in the shop, according to a statement released by PUC Public Relations later that day.

“Campus facility manager Dale Withers and Chevron employees immediately took appropriate actions,” the statement reads.

The Angwin Fire Department arrived

on the scene and quickly put out the fire after both the natural gas and Chevron gas supplies near the facility had been shut off. Angwin Fire Department Chief J.R. Rogers said it took about 15 minutes to extinguish the fire from the time they were dispatched, and that they needed to work quickly because of the quantity of

**continues on page 2**



## FROM THE EDITOR

As we collectively and anxiously look towards the end of this academic year, I am also looking forward to the near future as your new editor-in-chief of the Campus Chronicle.

To our outgoing editor Lauren, if it was not for your guidance, dedication and encouragement, I would not be here today. I hope to carry on your work in changing the paper for the better, something I witnessed with each edition published under your leadership.

To our readers, it has been your support and suggestions that has allowed for us to all make the Chronicle what it is—an award-winning student-run newspaper. To say it is not an easy job is an understatement, and while the prospect of leading it is certainly intimidating, it is absolutely a job worth doing.

I strive to do my part in continuing to improve communication and quality, but I

don't believe words can express just how thankful I am for the Campus Chronicle staff and our community for all of what they do for each publication.

When I first joined as a writer during the pandemic, I was struggling immensely with my mental health. Even as we were all separated from each other, it was the connections I made and the community I became part of through the Chronicle that helped me pull through that difficult time.

I hope the supporters of the Chronicle—whether you are a staff member, contributor, or reader—find a similar comfort wherever it is needed in your life. Have a safe and happy summer and God bless.

*Sincerely,  
Madison Brogan  
Editor-in-Chief*



## COMMUNITY

### continued from page 1

flammable materials located in the building and surrounding area.

“The Chevron station sustained minor damages that should not result in a long-term closure,” the public relations statement continues. While the station is not yet up and running again, “Howell Mountain Enterprises is working to restore Chevron services as soon as possible.”

The auto shop itself has yet to be assessed to determine whether salvaging it is a viable option. ■



The fire department arrives as smoke rises from the building

*photo courtesy PUC Public Relations*



Emergency services personnel clean up after the fire was put out

*photo courtesy PUC Public Relations*



## FEATURE

# Nursing Professor Serah Choi Awarded Educator of the Year

By Marina Maher

On May 19, professor Serah Choi was announced as the 2022 student-elected Educator of the Year during the faculty awards Community program.

Led by professors Bryan Ness and Tammy McGuire, the program began with recognition of various faculty members' hard work and special projects in and out of the classroom.

2021 Educator of the Year, Dr. Sara Kakazu, delivered an address about her expectations and passions in teaching and the importance of human contact regardless of time or distance.

With a bouquet of flowers and a framed certificate in hand, Academic Dean Milbert Mariano invited Choi to the stage where Kakazu assisted her in donning the customary Educator of the Year superhero cape.

After a presentation and slideshow of photos narrated by Choi's husband, nursing department chair Professor Kimberly Dunker expressed her excitement at this being the first year in which a nursing professor was honored as Educator of the Year.

Dunker then introduced nursing students Ayla Oania and Levi Alamo, who gave a tribute to Choi. "Professor Choi was always there with her big smile, her encouraging words, and her calming presence reminding me that I belong there," Alamo said of his time working with Choi during his hospital clinicals.

Nursing colleague Jenna Park also paid tribute to Choi, who was her own professor when Park was a PUC student. "Professor Choi showed me that you can be both friends and a professor to students, which I think students also crave," she said.

President Trecartin closed the ceremony with prayer for the continued success of PUC faculty and students. ■

**"Professor Choi was always there with her big smile, her encouraging words, and her calming presence reminding me that I belong there."**



**Trecartin (L) and Mariano (R) present Choi with her certificate**



**Kakazu (center) presents Choi (L) with two Educator of the Year traditions—the lightsaber and superhero cape**

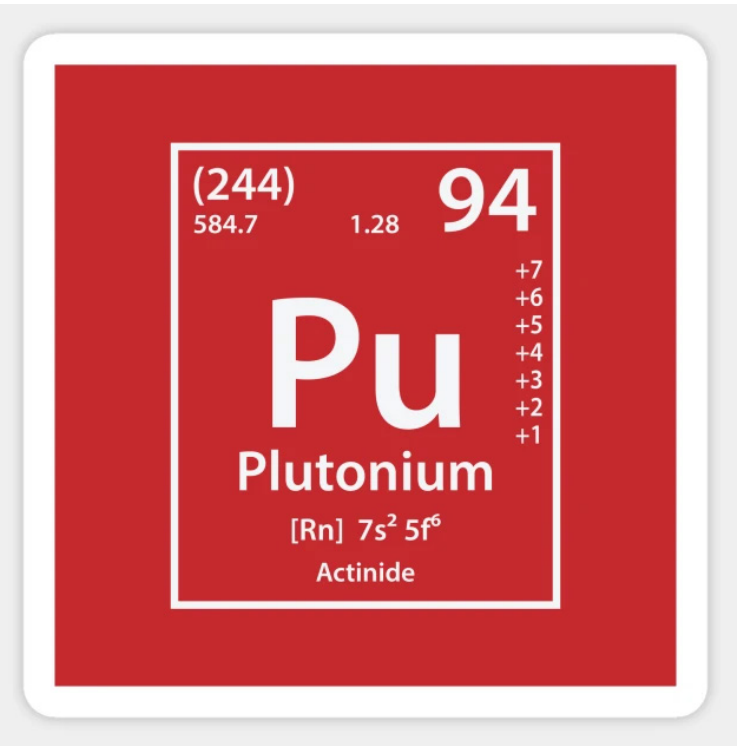


CONVERSATION

# Physics Department to Decommission Plutonium Supply

By Dani LaBore

After decades of storage, the physics department is in the process of disposing of its supply of plutonium which it obtained in the early 1960s. This metal is a radioactive element used as fuel in nuclear reactors, as well as an explosive in nuclear fission weapons.



According to professor James Robertson, it wasn't unusual for colleges to acquire plutonium during this time period. "Sources in a 5 Ci 'neutron howitzer' configuration were commonplace in colleges and universities during the 1960s for the purpose of nuclear research across the U.S.," he explained, referring to laboratory equipment used to activate radioactive samples.

Because plutonium is more radioactive than uranium, which is used to make atomic bombs, it needs to be stored in a specialized location. A space in Chan Shun Hall was designed for this purpose. The storage area is surrounded by four feet of concrete and is vented to the roof. Leak tests are done every six months to ensure there is no radiation outside the walls. Access to the element is also restricted to trained personnel.

Not just anyone can own plutonium. PUC obtained a license through California's Department of Public Health Radiologic Health Branch with the help of Robertson, who explained, "The college's license lists

me as the Radiation Safety Officer since I am qualified by training and experience that I achieved while I worked at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory."

The era for the usefulness of radioactive materials at PUC has passed. Despite a value around \$30 million, the radioactive nature of the metal makes it illegal for the college to sell it. In addition, it has an especially short half-life which causes it to emit much more radioactive energy than most other radioactive isotopes.

Because of the highly radioactive nature of plutonium, PUC can no longer own it. "You might say we are the licensed custodians of the plutonium," Robertson explained. "We are responsible for its safe use and handling until such time it can be transferred to another custodian authorized by the U.S. government."

PUC is the last known college in California to possess plutonium. However, the financial hardships associated with the \$5,000 plus annual state license fee has forced the physics department to begin the process of decommissioning its plutonium supply.

**"You might say we are the licensed custodians of the plutonium. We are responsible for its safe use and handling until such time it can be transferred to another custodian authorized by the U.S. government."**

Most authorized disposal programs charge a large sum to decommission plutonium. However, Robertson's search for a more cost-effective solution has led him to a federal program that doesn't charge to

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor-in-Chief

Madison Brogan

Assistant Editor

Lauren VandenHoven

Journalists

Charlie Kefalos

Dani LaBore

Marina Maher

Layout & Design

Sarah Franklin

Photographers

Keren Castro

Josué Hilario

Faculty Adviser

Lynne Thew

Design Adviser

Brian Kyle

dispose of the metal. After almost four years on a waitlist, the department's plutonium is scheduled to be decommissioned in mid-June. Robertson said that "ultimately it will be transported to a storage facility owned by the federal government." ■



## CAMPUS

# Visual Art Thesis Exhibition Explores the Fantastical and Familiar



Paulson with her original game "the North Side of Down"

By Lauren VandenHoven

Visual art majors Joy Paulson, Sarah Moon and Keren Castro celebrated the culmination of their thesis projects in the Senior Thesis Exhibition at the Rasmussen Art Gallery beginning May 21.

Graphic design major Joy Paulson's thesis, "The North Side of Down," is a playable tabletop board game which brings to life a story like the ones she has been creating in her head and putting into the world since she was a child. "I have always been told that stories are a key factor of art," she said. "You cannot have one without the other or else they both fall apart."

Most of the stories which inspire "The North Side of Down" came to Paulson just as she was about to fall asleep. She drew her inspiration from games she loved, including video game characters and other tabletop

**"I have always been told that stories are a key factor of art. You cannot have one without the other or else they both fall apart."**

games like Dungeons & Dragons.

The decision to create a game was the product of Paulson's passion for the characters she designed. "I felt an itch I just couldn't scratch, and eventually trial and error introduced me to a world I wanted to dive headfirst into: the World of Down," she said.

To bring the story to life, Paulson created her own written language, and taught herself to use new media such as rendering with Blender software, engraving and 3D printing.

She created four "nations" of characters represented by three pieces each: Tagirin, Sloozehorn, Thadox and Feeler. Each player's objective is to move all three pieces from their chosen nation to the end of a board of shifting tiles which are rearranged at each turn.

Paulson designed original tiles, cards and, of course, her character pieces, which all help the player to move through this "fantastical narrative" safely to the end of their journey.

Fellow graphic design major Sarah Moon created an interactive museum exhibit model for her project, "Nervøs," which aims to increase awareness for anxiety and mental health.

"Realizing the stigma that our society has created around anxiety and mental disorders played a huge role in sparking my inspiration for this project," Moon said.

Moon created branding for the museum, including billboards and signs for advertising purposes and for use in the museum. Her multimedia project display included mockups of the branding, a model of the exhibit itself, a bulletin board where viewers could tack up and begin conversations on their own fears and anxiety triggers, and more.

The museum model walks the viewer through the history of anxiety and its treatment and allows them to "experience some of the world's most common phobias first hand." The viewer makes their way through representations of various anxiety triggers in order to better understand mental health and mental health management.

In summarizing the intended outcome of her project, Moon said, "I'm hoping people learn a little more about anxiety and mental health and are more open and willing to talk about it."

Keren Castro's photography thesis, "Uncovered," is a collection of black and

**continues on page 7**



## CULTURE

# Diogenes Film Festival Features Student Filmmakers



Student filmmakers pose with their professors at the March 29 Senior Thesis Showcase of the Diogenes Film Festival at the St. Helena High Performing Arts Center

*photo courtesy Brian Kyle*

**By Charlie Kefalos**

On the evening of May 22, students, faculty, staff and friends gathered in Dauphinee Chapel for the 18th annual Diogenes Film Festival, a showcase of three years' worth of student-produced short films.

The 2022 festival was the first time the event had been hosted in three years due to COVID-19 restrictions. Freshmen, sophomores and juniors presented their projects during the first showing. Student work came from several genres, with narratives, documentaries, experimental films and music videos all part of the night's showcase.

"It's not 'Adventures in Odyssey,' but it's not 'Euphoria,'" joked Rajeev Sigamoney, the night's host and chair of the visual arts department.

After each screening, Sigamoney led the student filmmakers in a brief Q&A session. They shared inspirations, frustrations and

insights with the attendees, as well as anecdotes about their experiences making movies in the middle of a pandemic.

The audience was asked to vote for their favorite film from each block. Josue Hilario's R&B music video "Sanity" received an Audience Choice award, as well as "Unconditional," a drama by Ysabelle Labaco and Atlas Snarr.

Academic Dean Milbert Mariano presented the Filmmaker of the Future award, given to the student filmmaker whose work was rated the highest by the festival's panel of judges. Fabiola Ixcot took the top prize with her short film about memory, "Fading," which was made in Mexico with a pair of professional actors.

So many films were submitted that the festival was split into two separate showcase nights, with the Senior Thesis Showcase held on May 29 in the Performing Arts Center at St. Helena High School. This



Josette DeTour (second from left) speaks about her senior thesis film

*photo courtesy Brian Kyle*

extended showcase featured not only the work of this year's graduating seniors, but those of the previous two years who missed the opportunity to show their films during the pandemic. ■



## CAMPUS

### continued from page 5

white photos of her own body, partly covered with draped fabric, but mostly vulnerable to the camera, discovering the art in her own form.

Castro's thesis did not follow her original plan. "My initial goal was to photograph other women to help them find confidence in who they are," she said, "but before I could go there, I needed to evaluate where I was, learn to love my insecurities and how my body was made."

This first step led her toward a more self-reflective project, and she grew to love not only the photos she produced, but also her own body in the process.

At first, Castro found photographing herself to be a daunting task. "I kept putting off going into the studio because I was so scared," she said. "What if someone walks in, what if I'm caught?" She noted feeling "exposed" and wanting to "get out of there" as soon as she could. "But once I started taking photos I couldn't stop," she said.

The correlation between photography and body image has been on Castro's mind long before this project, and she has considered having someone photograph her body in the past. "I thought maybe if someone else would be able to capture me in a beautiful way, I would finally love who I was and what I looked like," she said. "Tonight, I did that for myself. And that's the greatest validation I can get."

"As I was editing these photos, I became so proud of myself," she continued. "I fell in love with how I looked. I didn't see stretch marks and body fat—I saw me. The curves, the beauty, my skin tone, the textures, the way the lighting moved along my body. I saw art. My body is art. Crazy to think about, I know." ■

**"I thought maybe if someone else would be able to capture me in a beautiful way, I would finally love who I was and what I looked like. Tonight, I did that for myself."**



**Castro with photos from her thesis "Uncovered"**



**Gallery attendees chat with artists and explore the exhibition**



**Moon with the interactive display from her project "Nervøs"**



CAMPUS

# Final Community Celebrates Students with Awards and Scholarships

By Marina Maher

During the last Community of the academic year on Thursday, June 2, President Ralph Trecartin and PUC’s administrative team celebrated student successes by presenting awards in leadership, academic achievement, athletics and scholarship earnings.

Academic Dean Milbert Mariano presented the Departmental Academic Commendations, in which students from each department are recognized for their scholastic success. Students were awarded from the departments of aviation, biology, business, chemistry, communication and world languages, education, English, health sciences, history, kinesiology, math/physics, music, nursing, psychology, social work, theology and visual arts.

Scholarships and grants were also offered through departments, organizations and donors.

In addition to departmental academic

achievement, seniors Megan Bothwell, Andrew Fay, Robert Gouveia, Nathan Kim, Kaila Respicio and Hailey Snyder were recognized as Summa Cum Laude graduates.

Associate Vice President for Student Life J.R. Rogers presented student leadership awards to Student Association officers Aileen Kurts, Alex Chuquimia, Karen Asij, Audry Guzman, Kaitlyn Nakanishi, Joy Paulson, Lauren VandenHoven and Adam Adreveno.

Student Senate members representing academic departments and residence halls were recognized for their leadership contribution, as well as senators-at-large and secretary to senate. Katherine Anaya received the award for Senator of the Year.

Residence hall assistants from Andre, Grainger, McReynolds, Newton and Winning halls were acknowledged for their hard work, and campus ministries leaders,

student chaplains and life group leaders were appreciated for their spiritual influence across campus this year.

Student employees were also celebrated in their places of work throughout campus and the local community, such as ACE Hardware, accounting, academic administration, alumni and advancement, athletics, Bon Appetit, campus ministries, custodial services, Discoveryland Preschool, emergency services, facilities management, health services, ITSS and various academic departments.

Mariano also recognized scholars and distinguished athletes from the women’s and men’s basketball, cross country, volleyball and soccer teams. The Athletic Champions of Character award was also given to one student from each of the women’s and men’s teams. The Presidential Scholar Athlete of the Year award was given to Tyler Wilensky from the men’s cross country team. ■

| UPCOMING EVENTS                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Friday, June 10                     | Vespers<br>Campus Center patio, 8 p.m.                   |
| Monday, June 13                     | Strawberry Shortcake Feed<br>Campus Center patio, 6 p.m. |
|                                     | Visual Arts Senior Portfolios<br>Fisher Hall 210, 8 p.m. |
| Tuesday, June 14                    | “A Bashing Good Time” Car Bash<br>Campus Mall, 10 a.m.   |
| Thursday, June 16                   | Last day of final examinations                           |
| Friday, June 17-<br>Sunday, June 19 | Graduation and Commencement                              |

## FIND THE ANSWER, WIN FREE COFFEE!

In every issue, we’ll ask you a question with an answer hidden somewhere in the paper. The first person to find the answer and message us on Instagram @pucchronicle will win a free drink at the Grind! This week’s question is:

**Which of the four cardinal directions is included in the title of Joy Paulson’s senior thesis?**